

11/09/2019

Hi,

Days twenty-five through twenty-seven; in Melbourne....

Day 25 (11/7/2019) – Our new Australian friends from the New Zealand portion of our trip told us repeatedly about the draught in Australia. They must have been from Sydney; certainly not from where we have traveled to date. Since leaving Adelaide and driving toward Melbourne, we have seen nothing but green fields, cloudy weather and more recently rain. The forecast for our entire stay in Melbourne is for rain.

We left Apollo Bay this morning in the rain heading for Melbourne. It's unfortunate, because we drove along beautiful sections of coast line most of the way and couldn't even get out of the car without getting soaked. We spent to morning driving and arrived at our hotel in Melbourne early afternoon; yes, in the rain. It was time to return our Toyota Camry that served us so well; even with the steering wheel on the wrong side. Our hotel was the Pan Pacific at the convention center in Melbourne; pretty upscale hotel. Upon arrival I parked at the entrance where I explained to the bellboy that I was going to check in and then return the car in at the rental agency. Having checked the map, I realized that the rental agency was 7 or 8 kilometers (~5 miles) from the hotel. I asked concierge whether there was a closer Avis office; big mistake! He found one and showed me where it was on the Melbourne map. Since I was going to walk back to the hotel Esther and Joyce decided to go with me for the walk.

That was where our frustration, especially mine, started. We drove all over the section of Melbourne looking for the Avis office; never found it. Since I was in a hurry to move the car from where it was in front of the hotel, we didn't bring my original directions or my cell phone, which also had the directions, with us. Finally giving up, I said the heck with it and headed for the airport where I knew there would be an Avis office. Sure enough, we turned the car in, but now we're a long way from our hotel. Sixty Australian dollars later our taxi driver had us back to our hotel. Once back I looked at our original directions and it would have been a lot easier and cheaper to have taken the car to the location we should have. So be it; we are now back at the hotel sitting in Esther and my room with cheese and wine trying to decide what to do for dinner. We didn't care for the hotel menu or prices, but found there were a number of restaurants behind our hotel. We found one, had dinner and a glass of wine for \$48.00 Australian (~\$33.00). On the way back, we looked for a place to get an ice cream cone; couldn't find one. We did come across a convenient store selling Ben & Jerry's ice cream; bought two pints and it was back to our room to enjoy it. Also, on the way back to the hotel we came upon a store where we could stock up on or wine; so we did. That was our day; enjoyable in spite of the rain and the car frustration.

Day 26 (11/8/2019) – We started our day by Joyce and me going down to enjoy a hotel breakfast. Esther decided not to go along; too expensive, 30 dollars Australian, for just a bowl of cereal and she could get a few minutes additional sleep eye. We were considerate enough to bring a coffee and a couple Danishes back for sleep head. Today was forecast to be a rainy day, so we had our ponchos with us. After getting the two pokes, the ladies that is, moving we were off to explore Melbourne. As in Adelaide, we found there was a free tram around the city; far be it from us to pay for something free. So we headed out for the tram, ponchos in hand. Not paying attention, we got on a tram that stopped at the end of the line; not the one that looped around the city. After waiting an exorbitant amount of time at the station where we got off we concluded tram #35, the one that circled the city, was not coming or we

were not going to wait any longer for it. So we took a different tram back to the station we started from and waited there for about 15 minute for tram #35. Finally we were on the tram circling the city.

We circled the city once on the tram and got off at the station that was near where we were to start our previously scheduled, inclusive walking tour around the city. After finding the café meeting location with 45 minutes to spare, we went in for pizza; which it turns out was really good. At 1:55 pm our tour guide, Harriet, showed up, yellow umbrella in hand, which was our clue that she was our guide, and off we went on our walking tour. The tour included historic locations and food and drinking spots; went up and down streets through alleys and into building. All in all, it was enjoyable and we appreciated Harriet. To this point in the day, we had very little rain and most of the time we were under cover. During the times we weren't, Harriet provided us with umbrellas. At the end of the tour, feeling quite exhausted, we took the tram to a station reasonably close to our hotel and walk the rest of the way. Weather wise, the day was much better than expected.

Dinner tonight was a repeat of last night; same restaurant, same ice cream store and same wine store. It was then back to our room to wind up our night with a little Ben & Jerry's.

Day 27 (11/9/2019) – It was up a little later today and off to the Common Man for breakfast. We avoided the hotel restaurant because the breakfast is too expensive; 29AUD (~\$20.00) per person. Interestingly, at most of the restaurants we have visited, you sit down to look at the menu, get back up and got to the bar, place your order, pay for your meal and go back and sit down to wait to be served; no orders taken at the table. Well, that what we did this morning for breakfast. After breakfast we came back to the motel to gather our stuff and off we went to the Queens Victoria Market. It took two trams to get there; easy, because I am becoming an expert on how to use the free tram system. We walked through the market for a while; enjoyed a coffee and pastry and headed back. It was a very large market with a large section selling meats and fish. It was fun just looking at what they were selling and their prices. After leaving, it was getting close to noon, so we decided to go back to Time Out café, kind of on our way, that we had lunch in yesterday and have the same pizza again. Following lunch we headed back to the hotel to do whatever; re-pack for our four days on the road again, rest, work on emails, play games on an ipad, etc.

It's now dinner time and so as to not eat in the same restaurant for a third night, we decided to head to the hot eating spot in Melbourne; so it was back on the tram again. Finding a restaurant to our liking was not easy. In a busy alley we finally found a restaurant, or hole in the wall, that we all agreed we could live with. As with the last I don't know how many nights, we had a pasta meal; okay, but not great. Then it was on to the tram back to our hotel However, since the tram that showed up was tram #35 and we knew that it circled the city, most of the time that is, we got on. Expecting #35 to circle the city we decided to stay on it and view the city at night. Out luck again, the tram went off on a side track to the end. Now, how do we get back to the hotel in the dark. Finally on the reverse side of the track came tram #70. I know that it passed our stop so we jumped on that tram. For some reason, it didn't stop at our stop, but it did the next one and we walked back to the hotel from there.

Melbourne was okay, but certainly not one of the better locations we visited.